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How companies invest in training: trends and predictions for 2024

A look at current trends in corporate investments in employee training and some future predictions.

In the dynamic and increasingly competitive context of the global market, investing in **employee training** is essential for the growth and success of companies.

As **Peter Senge**, professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Founder of the Society for Organizational Learning, states, "The only competitive advantage an organization has over the competition is the ability to learn faster than others." This quote has never been as relevant as it is today, in an era characterized by rapid digitalization and the continuous evolution of required skills.

Digitalization has radically transformed the way companies operate and compete in the market. Automated processes, artificial intelligence, data analysis: these are just some of the elements that have redefined the skill requirements for employees. In this constantly evolving scenario, investing in training your team is no longer a choice but a strategic necessity to remain relevant and competitive.

Global trends and investment estimates in corporate training

Corporate training investment is influenced by a series of macroeconomic and cultural factors. According to a global survey by **Statista**, the **average training expenditure** per employee steadily increased between 2008 and 2019, then slightly decreased in 2020 due to the pandemic. In 2021, it rose to over 1,200 euros per worker, while in 2022, there was a 4.7% decrease.

In Europe, support for skills and SMEs is strengthened by initiatives such as the **European Skills Agenda and the Pact for Skills**, launched in 2020. In recent years, corporate training investment has increased thanks to these programs, which have helped around 2 million people improve their skills, with a total investment of 65 billion euros.

The European Commission on the **European Pillar of Social Rights** has set a clear goal to be achieved by 2030: to **involve at least 60% of European adults in training courses**.

Continuous training and national trends

In **Italy**, adult participation in **continuous training** initiatives in 2022 was 9.6%, placing the country eighteenth in Europe. Italian companies rank fifteenth in terms of training investments. According to the report "Training and Work: The Situation in Italy" by Enzima12, 39.3% of the adult population participates in training activities, with a higher incidence among 25-34-year-olds (17.1%). The most active regions in training are Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, and Trentino Alto Adige.

According to an Istat report published in December 2022, i**n Italy, the average cost of an hour of training for a company is about 56 euros**. It was also observed that **in 2020 Italian companies invested about 6,218 million euros in corporate training.** The previous report from 2015 had observed that the amount spent on continuing education was 4,513 million; therefore, it can be stated that this is a growing trend, although we are still far from the European average investment.

A significant **obstacle to corporate training investments** is the perception that staff do not need further skills, a reason reported by 72.3% of companies. However, the pandemic pushed many companies to invest in digitalization: 40% of Italian companies saw it as an opportunity to improve their digital capabilities, compared to 46% of the European average.

In summary, at both global and national levels, **the focus on corporate training is increasing**, although in Italy, there are still significant regional differences in investments. Overall, the idea that companies investing in training are better prepared to face

future challenges and seize the opportunities offered by digitalization and technological innovation is becoming increasingly rooted.

Predictions for 2024

In 2024, it is predicted that corporate training investments will continue to grow, driven by the need to adapt to the rapid **transformations of the labor market** and **new technologies**. Italian companies will need to increase their training budgets, recognizing the importance of developing advanced skills among their employees to remain competitive.

The main areas of investment will include: digitalization and sustainability, focusing on artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things (IoT), blockchain, and ethical business practices.

In addition to these aspects, there will be a significant increase in **key trends such as upskilling and reskilling**, personalized training thanks to generative artificial intelligence, and **microlearning**. These approaches will be essential to bridge the skills gap caused by the adoption of new technologies and labor market disruption. Modern learning platforms enabled by AI will allow the creation of interactive and personalized learning experiences on a large scale, increasing engagement and retention of skills.

Government policies and European funds, such as the Pact for Skills, will be crucial to support Italian SMEs in developing their training paths. Additionally, **data-driven learning** will become increasingly central, using learning management systems capable of collecting, analyzing, and suggesting actions based on data, improving the effectiveness of training programs.

Italian companies, by increasing their efforts in training and adopting innovative approaches such as blended learning and microlearning, will be better prepared to face global market challenges in 2024 and beyond. With the combination of advanced technologies, government support, and employee-centered learning strategies, companies will be able to maintain a competitive advantage and promote sustainable and inclusive skills development (Source: **CYPHER Learning**).